

ISAPS Personal Power Workshop – Virtual Exercise

When we discuss a leader's impact it can often seem quite difficult to pin down - slightly ephemeral. This is because impact is really a description of the effect of a **relationship**. So when we want to boost our impact we must attend to the people we are impacting and affecting and think about the **story of our relationship with them**.

Anecdotes

When you relate an anecdote about something that happened to you, three elements will always feature

- **Sequence**
An audience needs some context before we are ready for events. What world are we talking about, who is the person or people we are following along the sequence, what is the normal expectation? Then we are ready for events, predicaments and problems – sometimes only one, sometimes a chain of cause and effect. Then there is some kind of solution or resolution, and a return to new normal. The story is the chain of cause and effect that takes you through this sequence.
- **Images**
When we hear or read a story we picture the events in our head, collaborating in the storytelling and becoming a creative participant. This is one reason why storytelling is so impactful – even without verbally responding an audience is drawn into a relationship with the speaker.
- **Emotions**
Stories engage our feelings as the hero or heroes suffer events, mishaps, mistakes and disasters. When we hear disaster stories we warm to the storyteller, because sharing errors, failures and mistakes is braver than hiding them – and it feels like honest and trustworthy discourse. Perfect, error-free success stories trigger withdrawal and disconnection, so we don't tell them. That's why you can't think of any you have ever heard.

What Is A Story?

- **A Story is an account of how People and Things are changed by other People and Things**
That's why successful leaders become good storytellers – because they and the people they lead are changing things. Everyone then has a story to tell about the literal Difference they made
- **The most important change is a change in Feelings**
However cataclysmic the change, we need to know what it means to people before we care.
- **Things don't matter until they matter to People, because only People have Feelings**
When carrying out large scale changes, it is the emotional impact on people that will drive the story that people tell about it.
- Stories answer the most important question: **WHY**

As an exercise, make notes and with a partner draft your **Hero Origin Story**. Tell a story that answers this question:

'Why do you do the work you do?'

Points to consider:

- Say who the people are, and give them names
- Give some detail about the problem they face
- What did the problem mean, emotionally
- And how were they changed by the events, emotionally
- Heroes make choices – what did the choice cost?

This may be an event from childhood, it may be a recent experience that revised or renewed your vocation.

Try it out on a trusted colleague and request feedback. You will need to tell it a number of times before experience teaches you what to cut and what to emphasise. Look out for moments of self-congratulation; audiences are more responsive to stories of what you learn from failure and humility!

Please do let me know your experience: alex@the-spontaneity-shop.com